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devised the furniture of the said house "All and entirely with my silver plate and my wearing apparel and my jewelry, except such articles as I shall hereafter name, with all my books and musical instruments, everything in the house to my beloved niece, Ellen Keene."

At the death of this niece, some years ago, who had subsequently married, certain bequests of Miss Keene's became operative and in the course of the settlement of the estate, the furniture came under the hammer—with the result that the pieces enumerated above found their way to the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art—where they will remain undisturbed and cared for to the end of time.

S. Y. S.



WALL-TABLE OF BOULLE STYLE XVIII CENTURY

At the same sale of furniture forming part of the Lenox Estate, which took place on January 31, 1912, the Pennsylvania Museum also acquired, through the generosity of Mr. John H. McFadden, a fine old Boulle wall-table which, according to a tradition handed down in the Keene family, was purchased in Paris by Major Lenox before the Revolution, and shipped from England with the rest of his possessions on his return to this country. Judging from the table itself, the specimen is probably of Louis XV or early Louis XVI manufacture. The legs are curved after the fashion of the Louis XV period in contrast to another eighteenth century Boulle table in the Museum's collection, which is of pure Louis XVI, and the legs of which are straight according to the style in vogue in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The same difference exists in the style of ornamentation. In the Lenox-Keene piece the copper gilt inlay is more elaborate and represents a definite scene with animated human figures as well as scrolls and conventional designs. The surfaces of inlay are somewhat larger and richer than are those observable in the purely conventional geometric designs of the later period which are executed with a noticeable lack of imagination.

As an art, the work of Boulle may be traced back in its inspiration to Italian marqueterie. One of the important effects of the royal matrimonial alliances between the reigning house of France and the House of Medici, in the sixteenth century was the influx of Italian artists and artisans that spread over the country and influenced French industries. Incrustations in the Italian taste, mosaic, painted plates, ivory, mother-of-pearl and even amber inlays appeared. Brass inlay and tortoise shell applied on wood followed, and this technique took the name of its principal exponent, "Boulle." It is about this time that the console table and the "guéridon" are first seen. Under Louis XIV the "ébéniste" Lepautre proceeded directly from the Italians, and Domenico Cucci, "ébéniste et fondeur"—as appears from the account books of the time, was noted for ornate ebony cabinets ornamented with Florentine mosaic work, and

superb bronze door-handles, locks, bolts and mountings. It is not unlikely that some of the bronze ornaments used on Boulle's furniture came from him. Filippo Caffieri another noted artist fills the gap between Cucci and Lebrun. André Charles although credited with the invention of the style of Marqueterie, known as Boulle, was obviously not the first to do this work. Father Orlando in his "Abecedario Pittorico" published in 1719—*i. e.* during the life of André Charles, and therefore probably exact—states that the artist must have devoted his time to painting had not his father, artisan cabinet-maker (*artifice ebenista*) influenced him to follow his art. Who was this father? No one knows, save that he inhabited Paris, since André Charles was born there on November 11, 1642. Charles Read, who tried to solve the riddle, discovered that the Boulle family was of Protestant origin and belonged to the Reformed Church of Charenton. Certain official documents found by him state that as early as 1619 a certain Pierre Boulle was cabinet-maker to the King and lodged



BOULLE TABLE

Latter Half of Eighteenth Century
Given by Mr. John H. McFadden

in the Louvre. His wife was Marie Bahuche, a sister of Marguerite Bahuche, widow of the famous Jacques Bunel, first painter to Henry IV and herself a painter. But the free lease of the Louvre lodgings made over to the painter Thomas Picquot "in the place of the late Sieur Boulle, Carpenter in ebony" is dated January 2, 1636; which conclusively proves that this could not have been the father of André Charles, who was born six years later. Thanks to



TOP OF BOULLE TABLE

Mr. Read it is known that this man had five children of whom three were sons—one of these may have been his father, provided he married young.

There is, however, another Pierre Boulle, also royal cabinet-maker, on record in the royal archives who was paid a salary in 1636, "up to August 1st."

Of all this, the only certain fact is that André Charles was not the founder of the celebrated family of artisans, as some twenty years before he began work, furniture was already made in marqueterie, of which shell and burnished copper inlays furnished the decoration, as appears from the "Inventaire du Cardinal de Mazarin," drawn 1653, when our artist was only eleven years of age. A piece is therein described: "Another cabinet of tortoise shell and ebony inlaid with copper gilt on the sides, carried on four monsters of copper gilt. The four corners provided with copper gilt corners, à jour, with leaves,

masques, cartouches and animals, the front of drawers of copper gilt with figures representing divers fables of Ovid's 'Metamorphose,' set into surfaces of tortoise shell."⁽³⁾

However this may be, André Charles Boulle was the most famous cabinet-maker of this epoch. He lived at the Louvre where he was born in 1642. Two of his family were "menuisiers du roi" before him and lodged in the Louvre, although it is not clear what relation he bore to Jean and Pierre Boulle, the latter of whom died at the Louvre in 1680. André Charles started life as an artist and little is known about him until the year 1672, when he is on record as having been granted the lodgings in the Louvre become vacant by the death of Jean Macé, because of his experience as "ébéniste, faiseur de Marqueterie, doreur et ciseleur du roi." A second grant, bearing date 1679, adds to the above the half-lodging formerly used by Guillaume Petit, in order that he might complete the works ordered of him by his Majesty.

Father Orlando⁽⁴⁾ is responsible for the information that Boulle also was an architect, painter and sculptor in mosaic, as well as a draftsman of monograms and Keeper of the Royal Seals. From various accounts it would appear that no branch of art was foreign to him, and his personality was such that he could hardly be classed among cabinet-makers pure and simple.

At first, he seems to have worked in wood "marqueterie" and he long continued at this style of workmanship. In the second half of his life, he became penetrated with the great compositions of Lebrun, and it is then that he composed those fine pieces of shell and copper inlay, with fine gilt figures—some of which have been preserved in museum collections. Later again, influenced by Bérain, who, in turn, was largely indebted to Lebrun, he made use of the grotesque and added to gilt copper, tin inlays. It has been said that his four sons "aped" him, but some good pieces have been preserved from their workshops, and their work is far from representing all that has been left in imitation of Boulle. In the early years of Louis XVI the Boulle fashion returned and his work was again copied. But these later pieces have no longer the large vigorous execution of the master and they offer a fineness of execution unknown to him. The first are gilt in ormolu while the others are gilt in "or mat" a style in which some of the effect is lost.

In the earlier examples of the style made by Boulle, the inlay was produced at great cost, owing to the waste of material in cutting, and the shell is left of its natural color. In the later work the manufacture was more economical. Two or three thicknesses of the different materials were glued together, and sawn through at one operation. An equal number of matrices or hollow pieces exactly corresponding, were thus produced, and, by counter-charging, two or more designs were obtained by the same sawing. These

(3) Havard III., 736, Paris. Quantin.

See also A. de Champeaux "Le Meuble," p. 6 and following.

Comp. with "Pierre et Charles André Boulle" (Archives de l'art Français I., IV.).

Also with Charles Asselineau, "André Boulle, Ebéniste de Louis XIV."

Also Esther Singleton, "Furniture," p. 50-1911.

(4) Abecedario Pittorico.

are technically known as *boulle* and *counter*, the brass forming the ground work and the pattern alternately. In the later "*boulle*" the shell is laid on a gilt ground or on vermillion as in the Lenox-Keene table. Sometimes the two styles are distinguished as the first part and the second part. The general opinion on the relative value of each seems to be that, while admitting the good effect of the two styles as a whole, the first part should be held in higher estimation as being the more complete. In this may be seen with what intelligence the elaborate graving corrects the coldness of certain outlines; the shells trace their furrows of light, the draperies of the canopies fall in cleverly disordered folds, the grotesque heads grin, the branches of foliage are lightened by the strongly marked edges of the leaves, and everything lives and has a language. In the counterpart we can find only the reflection of the idea and the faded shadow of the original.⁽⁵⁾

The specimen just secured for the Museum shows *boulle* and *counter*, the brass forming both groundwork and design.

From 1673, accounts of royal edifices frequently mention Boulle, who worked on a salary, beside extras. In 1681, eight thousand livres were paid him for an organ-cabinet finished with gilt bronze ornaments.

He did important work for the Dauphin at Versailles; and a large coffer on a console by him is in the San Donato Collection. He also executed orders for foreign Courts—Spain, Bavaria, Lorraine, etc. The man, however, was always in money difficulties. He was a collector of prints and bought often on credit. In 1704 the King had to stand between him and his creditors on promise that he would pay them. Sixteen years later, however, his workshop was destroyed by fire at a direct loss amounting to 221,380 livres—while in orders for customers his losses were estimated at 72,000 livres, besides work on hand of his own, 30,000 livres. The sum total of his losses it is said, amounted to 383,780 livres.

André Charles Boulle died in 1732. His son Charles Joseph died at the Louvre in 1754. The business was then continued by his two first cousins, Pierre and Pierre Thilmant—Boulle.

Most of the numerous works of Boulle have been repaired, and copied by clever pupils. In the second half of his long life, in his own designs he seems to have followed Lebrun, and his brass *marqueterie* is generally on a field of black tortoise shell. Later he adopted the more fanciful style of Berain, "draftsman of the Royal Chamber and Cabinet"—who likewise lived at the Louvre and had been trained in Charles Lebrun's atelier which turned out so many artists—spreading his mythological or comic figures on a field of tortoise shell made to reflect various colors. He also used the designs of other artists; and Domenico Cucci finished many gilt bronze ornaments and reliefs for his furniture. His imitators were many, and they gradually strayed more and more from the master's models, until in the late eighteenth century their ornamentation is without character—finicking in style and largely made of tin.

S. Y. S.

⁽⁵⁾ Havard, loc. cit.